

RAIN-MAKING

Little information is available on the processes of rain-making among the Luo. Roscoe states that it is an important ceremony and is performed by a *ausaga* priests who lives among the people for this purpose. (1) According to Northcote, the rain-maker is greatly esteemed, and his home-
stead is usually found near a big tree which is considered sacred. When rain is wanted, he gathers some herbs, puts them in a large pot of water and boils them under the tree. He draws off a little into another pot and, sucking it up through a reed, squirts it into the air, after first blowing through the reed and making the pot bubble. (2) Evans-Pritchard mentions that the Luo rain-maker is called the *won koth* and that sometimes his functions are combined with those of the *jabilo*. Rain-makers among the neighbouring Bantu seem to have a higher reputation than Luo *jakoth* and are often consulted.

789

WITCHCRAFT

Sickness is thought to be due either to the malevolence of a ghost or, more frequently, to magic worked by some envious person who wishes to bring misfortune on his victim. (3) In either case the aid of a witchdoctor is sought and he, by means of various incantations, discovers the cause and the culprit. A sorcerer may cause death by spearing the shadow of his victim, by working spells, by hiding certain objects near the house which bring sickness to the inmates. If a ghost is causing trouble the witchdoctor prescribes offerings and sacrifices necessary for appeasement. He also discovers thieves, conducts ordeals and divines the causes of events. He makes counter-magic to defend people against the activities of sorcerers and is the general prescriber of all cures. Johnston mentions a 'deeper magic' (*jookingo*) which, among the Gemi tribe is practised by the blacksmiths. (4)

753
756
[754]

LIFE CYCLE

BIRTH

After the birth of a boy the mother stays inside the house for four days; for a girl, she stays inside for three days. The father of the child does not eat or sleep in the hut until the child begins to cut its teeth.

846

Twins are considered lucky; their arrival is attended by many ceremonies and by propitiatory dances.

845

PUBERTY

Until marriage, girls help their mothers in the fields and assist them in cooking and carrying. Boys help in herding the animals. At puberty both boys and girls have their front lower teeth extracted and for four days they remain in their homes. After this period they go about visiting

[857] ●
881
304

(1) Roscoe, *The Northern Bantu*, 1915, p.292.

(2) Northcote, *J.R.A.I.*, 1907, p.64.

(3) *Ibid.*

(4) *The Uganda Protectorate*, Vol.II, 1902.

241 Besides weeding, there is much to be done to protect the crop,
 [787] Hail storms do a lot of damage at times, and to protect the crops a
 "medicine" is employed called 'migalo magalo pe.' This consists
 of herbs tied in a bunch to the top of a pole about 6-8 feet high,
 which is stuck in the middle of the field. (Herdsmen too, use this
 [231] to keep themselves dry while out with the cattle, and I have seen a
 herdsman accompanying the cows with these herbs tied to the top
 [674] of his spear.) Except in time of famine, stealing from the crop is
 unknown, which contrasts favourably with complaints made from time
 to time that Natives steal maize and coffee from European farms.
 In their own community such an offence is practically unknown. But
 241 four-legged depredators are a serious problem in certain localities.
 417 Fields are enclosed in fences of the branches of thorn trees, laid on
 136 the ground, and these do give a certain protection against wild pigs,
 monkeys and baboons. But they are of no use against hippo and
 elephant. To protect crops, mainly sweet potato, against the hippo
 it is the practice to erect a small temporary hut, which is occupied at
 night by a guard armed with a couple of spears. It must be a weary
 business, for the potatoes are cultivated close to the lake edge where
 mosquitoes swarm, so between the hippo and the mosquitoes the guard
 [224] must have a trying time. In old days before the Game laws came in,
 organized hunts were held, which were very successful.

241 The most difficult animal is, of course, the elephant. These have
 136 disappeared from Central Kavirondo but still infest districts like
 Mirunda and Sakwa in South Kavirondo. They can do heavy damage
 both to millet and sweet potato. The beating of pots and pans is tried
 to scare away the elephant, while occasionally the more daring venture
 forth from the hut to throw stones or otherwise drive away the beasts.
 This is an operation attended with peril in the dark of the night, and
 occasionally lives are lost in this way. Lives too are lost through
 guards mistaking their fellow guards for wild animals. Jok, one of
 the most famous of ancestors of the Luo, is said to have lost his life
 in this way. The story is that before going off to drink beer, he
 told his sons to go on guard in the field that night. They refused to
 his face, but when he had gone thought better of it, and went on
 guard. He returned from the beer drink, and went to see what was
 happening in the field, believing that there was no guard. His sons
 mistook his footsteps for that of a pig, and speared him with fatal
 results. Similar things still occur from time to time.

241 Birds, especially weaver birds, are a pest as the grain crop
 136 ripens. Scarecrows are employed, both mechanical and human. Of
 the former an inverted cooking pot on the top of a short pole is a
 857 common device. Boys are employed in large numbers when the birds
 are most troublesome, and their harsh cries are quite a part of the

241 life of the countryside. Ofttimes the boys are armed with slings from
136 which stones are projected at random into the midst of the crop, or
857 into the midst of a flock of birds as they rise. One of the reasons why
the Luo denude the land of trees is because they give harbourage to
their bird enemies.

241 They are wise to insect pests also, and have a greater belief in
136 their remedies than many a farmer has in the aids supplied by our
789 civilization. The medicine is called by two names, "yadh miri" or
"yadh lisee." It is employed against a small red and black beetle,
called by the Luo "Nyanginja" which eats the flower of the millet,
thus preventing a crop. The medicine man who prepares it must be
a man of peaceable disposition and character, not a quarreller or
disputer with his neighbours. The whole success of the medicine
depends on the absence of disputation and quarrelling, and of the
grosser forms of vice, like adultery. No adulterer may be supplied
[837] with the medicine, for his very handling of it would nullify its useful-
ness, not only for himself, but also for his neighbours. All must be
peace in the community until the harvest is reaped. Unlike other
medicines, which are tied to a pole and left to work their influence,
"yadh miri" is made into a decoction, which is sprinkled over the
growing crop at eventide. I have seen the operation at a place called
Maranda in Sakwa, Central Kavirondo. It was then being used against
maize borer. At a time when this pest was giving a good deal of
trouble to European farmers, I heard a man who was back in the
Reserve on leave from a farm in the Kitale district, pour scorn on the
methods used by Europeans with various sprays. He was by way
of being one of the more progressive men, but he had nothing but
absolute faith in the efficacy of "yadh miri."

578 Crops damaged by domestic stock gave rise to many an angry
136 passion. The owner of the crop had liberty to chastise personally the
herdboy (or man) through whose carelessness the stock were left
untended. If the herd were a lad he could be cuffed and thumped
without being able to proceed against the assailant. Nor did the father
protest, provided the chastisement were in reason, for he knew that
his son had rendered him liable to a claim for compensation. As
likely as not he would add his own quota to the punishment already
meted out. If the owner feared that he would get the worst of it in
a personal encounter with a herdsman, then he had his remedy at law.

241 When the crop is ready for harvesting it is the duty of the men
to do the reaping. In the case of millet, this is a laborious business,
calling for judgment, for not all the heads would be ripe, and some
must be left to ripen after the bulk has been reaped. It is the task
[462] of the women and children to pack the crop into the grain baskets
857 and carry it to the grain stores. In the case of millet it is quite

241 Similarly, during this time she must be careful where she walks. She
 841 can ruin a crop by walking through it. But, of course, in this case, she would suffer with the other members of the family.

462 From early childhood the girl is brought up as an agricultural
 787 labourer. There was no class of women divorced from the soil. The
 791 only class whose labours in agriculture were lightened were the women who belonged to the divining cult of "SEWE." Sewe is the spirit of divination and is supposed to have descended on those who have been delirious in illness. The delirium is the sign of possession. The devotees of the cult are mainly women, and they are a fairly common sight as they go about their avocation. They are skilled beggars as well as diviners. With their bodies festooned with strings of beads, shells, bells and other barbaric ornaments, they pass from kraal to kraal, and standing with their bodies leaning forward supported by a hand resting on a short stick they sing songs of the countryside and are rewarded by presents of small baskets of grain. In this way women who have been ill are enabled to help to replenish the grain stores, which have probably run low during the illness.

241 Gradually a change is coming over the life of the women, due to
 177 white influence. Ploughing by the men with teams of oxen, is setting women free for other tasks. This movement is by no means widespread, but it has begun, and its effect on the women has been great.
 252 Even if the husband has no team and plough himself, many wives
 462 do not rest content until the husband has hired a plough owner to come along and plough up the land. It is not unusual for ploughs to be taken 15 miles for this purpose. Again, the use of hand mills of the "Colonist" type, is easing women of much labour at the grind stones. These are much more common than ploughs, probably there are twenty mills for every plough in use. This is partly accounted for by the fact that the mills are turned by hand power, not by oxen. At this labour girls and women take their share, but whereas you would never see a man down on his knees at the grindstone, you do see them turning a mill. New activities are employing the time of many women, and those who have learned to knit or make palm mats in recent years are rapidly increasing in numbers.

CHILD LABOUR:

857 Generally speaking, from early childhood, all are required to make some contribution to the activities of the home. Girls for the fields, and boys for herding, is the broad division of labour, though the boys also lend a hand in the fields, and, very occasionally, a girl or woman may be seen herding. With the opening up of
 593 avenues of wage-earning to the boys on coffee and tea estates, and in
 464 other forms of employment, the male child is being made by impecuni-
 651 ous parents to make his contribution to the family but take,

shave their heads, taking care to keep separate the hair which is cut off. This hair is hidden away in some place near, by preference in a rat-hole or in some hole where it is not likely to be found again. 846

Birth of twins. At the birth of twins the parents remain together in one house for ten days, and the midwife waits on them. When this time of seclusion ends, a small pot of blood is drawn from the neck of an ox, cooked and given to the parents to eat. After the meal they are escorted to the river, washed, and their heads shaved. Their house is then swept and the floor smeared with cow-dung, and friends come and dance in the village and drink beer. The mother takes the twins a round of visits which lasts several days, but she returns home each night to sleep. At each house she visits the people give her presents of grain. When the visits have been made the mother brews beer with the grain she has received in presents, and her friends again gather to dance and to drink the beer. 845 [431]

Initiation ceremonies. Children live in the same village with their parents and under their control. Until marriage they lead a free and happy life, with few wants and cares. The boys assist in herding cattle, and the girls help their mothers in their fields and also carry wood and water and assist in cooking. Their duties are light and there is no force beyond argument used to make them work. Children imitate their elders in seeking ornaments to wear and in smearing their bodies with oil and red or white paint. When they come to the age of puberty, their four front teeth in the lower jaw are extracted and they are initiated in the customs of the clan. For four days they remain in the house, after which they go about visiting their friends and receive presents of fowls. Girls go through the same ceremony as boys in having their teeth extracted, but, in addition, their bodies are scarified on the sides and back. Should there be excessive haemorrhage when teeth are extracted, the parents send to the man who has the bracelets of the deceased person after whom the boy is named and borrow them, and the youth wears them until the bleeding ceases. When the ceremony of extracting the teeth is over, the boys are sent to live in the boys' quarters. 881 304 [302] [431] [752] 482

18 LINEAGE FORMATION AMONG THE LUO

592 is a most important grouping intermediate between the compound family and its
 595 individual members. It is a semi-autonomous domestic unit with its own kitchen
 economy, its own property rights in cattle, goats, sheep, chickens, land, tools,
 granaries, and food stocks. Correspondingly it is responsible for its own building
 and repairs, fuel and water collecting, food provision and allocation from harvest
 to harvest, and has its own ritual rights and obligations. But the husband is an element
 common to them all and, having his own rights and duties in respect of these matters,
 [231] binds them closely together. Livestock are herded co-operatively, not only for all
 the elementary families of a homestead, but for several homesteads together. The
 [57] husband is the titular head of a corporate group, not an absolute rightholder.¹ He
 allocates land, cattle, and other property accruing to the compound family group
 among its elementary families, and this allocation limits the proportion in which it
 will eventually be inherited by the sons in each elementary family. He is also able to
 make levies of property for special purposes from all his elementary families. But in
 all situations involving social groups wider than the homestead, its head is subject
 to the decisions of the leader-in-council of the lineage segment to which he belongs.
 The exclusiveness of elementary families is potentially high, but in practice depends
 on the skill of the homestead head in securing and maintaining harmony, and on the
 natural compatibility or otherwise of co-wives. When these factors favour, co-wives
 may be seen co-operating in many tasks, taking it in turns to supply the husband—or
 one another's children—with food, combining as a team for garden work, or
 sharing one another's water-supply. But it cannot be denied that the Luo regard
 friction between co-wives as being a more normal state of affairs. Behind these
 situational variations lies the invariable right of the husband to regular cooked food
 from each wife, of each wife to regular sexual attention from the husband, and the
 general responsibility of each elementary family for its own self-maintenance granted
 its rightful assistance from the husband in his proper part of each task.

853 The rearing of children is woven into this framework. The baby's first contacts
 854 are naturally with its mother, who may not finally wean it till it is about two years
 old, unless as a result of a subsequent pregnancy she has to do so sooner; for suckling
 a child with a younger sibling in the womb is regarded as robbing and endangering
 [843] the latter. The baby sleeps in its mother's hut at night and sleeps and later plays near
 it during the day. It is most closely associated with the other members of its own
 elementary family, especially the female ones circling round the hearth for the
 preparation and cooking of food. Other members of the compound family will be
 hardly less well known from their presence together inside the homestead hedge,
 but all non-members of the homestead will be comparative strangers except very
 close relatives or near neighbours who are constant visitors within it.

854 Babies of either sex are soon each put in the charge of one of the older unmarried
 girls, probably a real or classificatory sister. This brings them in contact with the
 world outside the homestead, where a number of these nurse-girls (*Dholuo jopidi*)
 857 meet regularly in informal play groups. By the time children can run about on their
 own they too form play groups, including both girls and boys from several home-
 steads. Gradually the interests of the two sexes diverge, the boys going off with

¹ The Luo homestead in all phases of its life-cycle would sustain the definition of a corporate group in

Weber's sense. See *Theory of Political and Economic Organisation*, p. 135.

THE FAMILY

19

the herds and, by emulation of the age group next above them, slowly acquiring proficiency in the typical adult male pursuits, while the girls are drawn into the domestic tasks of the elementary family, food preparation and cooking, fetching water, and minding babies. 857●

The young boys of a play group sleep together in the goat hut of a homestead when they no longer share their mother's hut at night. The girls sleep together in the hut of some widow of the group who is past childbearing age. This is the most important institution for the transmission of female culture. Girls only leave it at marriage, and till that time they are continuously trained in the adult roles expected of them. Boys at puberty build themselves bachelor huts (Dholuo *simba*) in which they sleep and where they also entertain their girl friends. A group of young men makes a formal assignation with a group of nubile girls from a segment of another maximal lineage into which marriage is possible, and visits and entertainments are held to and from the one lineage territory to the other. The two groups pair off with one another into sex partnerships which last till the groups break up and reform. A youth graduates out of this company of *simba* age-mates at marriage. 573 861 882 836

Authority over children rests jointly with the parents. That of the mother is likely to be the most effective in the early years, and she always holds a strong sanction in her manipulation and control of the food-supply. The father is ultimately responsible for the order of the family, and his discipline is stronger than the mother's as the children grow older. There is a relation of friendly intimacy between alternate generations. Children are on easy terms with their grandparents and will certainly use the latter's households as an escape from home discipline or as a more generous source of food if need or opportunity arises. Children are at no period encouraged to live away from home with other relatives, but parents allow them to circulate freely among a number of homesteads wherever they find the best welcome and the most plentiful food, among families which are usually both neighbours and close agnatic relatives. Brother and sister have no material reasons for conflict and there is a strong and lasting bond of affection and reliance between them, institutionalized in the symbolism of a number of ritual occasions, and linked to their important later relation to one another's children as mother's brother (*wera*) and father's sister (*waya*). Apart from parents, these are the only two consanguine relatives of the first ascending generation who are picked out by special kinship terms. The newly married woman is under the authority of her mother-in-law, and a man's relation to his wife's parents is marked by deep respect and avoidances. Ritual practices as well as personal attitudes emphasize the importance of fertility and virility,¹ and the value attached by a man to a numerous offspring and the ability of his wives to provide it. The Luo are aware of the male and female parts in procreation, but say that 'the woman's blood goes for nothing'. This seems a necessary inference from the nature of lineage organization rather than vice versa, for they would not argue that there is any tendency for children to resemble the father rather than the mother, nor do they permit marriage with close consanguine kin though of an unrelated lineage. It is 593 603 574 858 593 [607] 606 842 [582]

¹ e.g. the special rites which have to be carried out for a nubile girl dying unmarried, a wife dying without children, a widow dying before remarriage, a man dying when one of his wives is still childless,

or a man dying before he has experienced sexual intercourse, the latter being treated similarly to a barren woman.

X

INTRODUCTION

121 later studies can be based. I have also worked on the assumption that a study of one's immediate background is an essential preliminary to wider investigation.

124 In conducting these studies of social life I have followed the questioning method, and having obtained information from individuals I later discussed that information with a number of other people. I was therefore able to check mistakes arising from purely individual opinion. Altogether nineteen women and eight men were interviewed with regard to family conditions and problems of inter-family relations. I also supplemented by personal observation the information given
 123
 857 me on the treatment and feeding of babies. When watching children at play I was sometimes obliged to keep out of view, as children normally feel shy when under the direct observation of an adult. The only group whose play I observed closely was composed of a child-nurse of about ten, my brother's son of eight months (born on August 26th, 1946), my sister's daughter of six, a son of four, and another elder son of about nine. At times I actually watched them playing, but on other occasions I had to visit their play-haunts and examine the articles they had left behind. I noticed that the locations varied very little. This small group gave me a good opportunity to study the play preferences of the two sexes.

123 With the more mature girls I was able to engage in
 124 free discussion, making use of the traditional opportunities for conversation at marriage ceremonies. In short, my field observations were distributed throughout a range of life from infancy to maturity.

SIMEON H. OMINDE

MAKERERE COLLEGE
 September 1949

6

THE LUO GIRL

856 constant help from the mother, the nurse, and other members of the family, the child is able to sit up without support.

[854] The practice of straddling the child on the hip begins during the sixth month. From this period there is a rapid development of its manipulative skill. Between the seventh and eighth months the child begins to crawl about on the floor, and will crawl away from wherever it is seated. As the child's manipulative skill develops he begins to pick up things that attract the eyes, often knocking them down repeatedly. The mouth is also used in testing the properties of articles. There is thus some difficulty in preventing the child from putting dirty things into its mouth.

If a child is not watched it may eat a large quantity of soil, a practice facilitated by its surroundings, the floor and ground in front of the house being bare earth. It is [164] therefore not surprising that children of this age frequently suffer from serious stomach trouble. Even before [854] the children begin to sit up, the nurses, who themselves [857] are only between six and eleven years old, do not effectively prevent them from touching dirty things, because they are sometimes tempted to run away to play, leaving the babies to look after themselves.

856 A child is persuaded to walk by holding its hands and helping it along. In this process the older person repeats the words 'Taa, taa,' in a monotone. The practice is continued daily until the child is able to walk; but as soon as it can support itself on its feet the mother or nurse may move away a short distance and try to induce it to come nearer. Every member of the family takes a great interest in all this and loses no opportunity to help the child.

According to my observations, cooing and the earliest symptoms of speech begin to come into evidence in the

II CHILDHOOD

BETWEEN TWO AND SIX YEARS

856 *Physical development.* Between the ages of two and five the means of locomotion mature. Healthy children are able during this period to walk and run about, and, even as early as this, young boys and girls begin to show subtle differences in their motor behaviour. Female children are less vigorous in their muscular movements, while male children tend to exaggerate them. But on the whole both sexes make good use of this newly acquired power. There is an increased desire to move about, intensified by a wish to meet young acquaintances at play.

[855] The work of the nurse then changes. Instead of looking
[857] after the child, she does simple housework, such as fetching water from the stream or well, and collecting firewood. In place of being its foster-mother she becomes the child's major playmate.

From this time onwards children grow rather thin. It is assumed that this slenderness of body is a sign that they are growing up. It is also believed that at this time male children are stronger than their female contemporaries.

856 *Mental development.* The mental development of a child
868 of this age is marked by a predominance of fantasy play, and a rapid mastery of spoken language. The imaginative play occupies longer periods than the other activities. The child learns language from its playmates as well as from the conscious efforts of members of its family. The effectiveness of the speech taught by its parents becomes more pronounced while the orders given begin to be better understood.

CHILDHOOD

11

The next step is for the child to be taught the names of those who visit the family. By this means it also learns how to know the relatives who are not living in the family home. Children of two to five know very few people beyond the members of their own family circle. Thus Obala, at three years old, did not know who I was, although I had been to her home and talked to her many times. Her parents told me that this was due to their never having told her my name. 867

Feeding. The food children eat at this stage is the same as that given to the adult members of the family, the only difference being that the children are not restricted to feeding at particular times. However little it may be, a certain amount of food is always left for them in the pot. 264 855

The children go out to play when the adults go to their different duties. In the middle of the day they return much exhausted and ask for the portion put aside for them after the morning meal. When there is only one child, the mother, before leaving for her day's work, tells it where to find this food. The varied and exacting activities of a child of this age make food an important factor in its life. [857]

PLAY

The play groups. The child begins its association with the play groups through the action of the nurses. At first the nurse, next to the mother, is its chief playmate. Through her the child comes into contact with children from neighbouring families and thus acquires friends and playmates. Although it takes the child a long time to make new friends, its social life begins as early as the seventh month when the nurses, wishing to play nearby, seat two babies side by side where they may learn to play together. 857 572

● 857 As the child grows older it begins to play by itself.
 593 Parents also amuse their children, but because they are generally away from the village, the children must either play with the nurses or by themselves. Before the child has learnt to talk, the play between it and the nurse is that of inducement to laughter or fright. Older children between two and five merely copy what the nurses do. These nurses, who are sometimes the children's own sisters, act as their instructors and demonstrators in the different play activities.

857 *Play activities.* Dolls like those existing in European society are unknown among Luo children. The children
 524 play with things they pick up, like stones, leaves—dry or green—and many other natural articles. In short, they adapt their environment to their own needs. They mostly prefer bright objects, and after the end of the day's play they return home with a load of playthings. These they keep in some corner, ready for the next day. Thus the younger children go on day after day bringing in new toys and throwing away the old. As we shall see later, the older children, or nurses, make their own dolls.

857 Once the children can walk and understand other
 526 children's language, the older ones may hide, calling for the younger ones to try to find them—a game resembling 'hide and seek'. Some parents maintain that a child of five is able to tell lies merely because he or she has had contact with older children already able to tell lies. But the habit of giving wrong interpretations to what they perceive is very common. Thus Otieno, having once suffered from a thorn-prick, mistook any hard object underfoot for a thorn. He was also fond of giving false alarms. I was frequently interrupted by the announcement of his father's return, and these announcements were often untrue.

CHILDHOOD

13

There is no rigid separation of the sexes in these play groups, although there is a clear distinction between the tendencies of the two sexes in any single gathering. The activities are largely imitative of real activities in adult life, falling into definite types, which develop progressively. 857 ●

Female children imitate the activities of the women. They also imitate funeral ceremonies in which both men and women take part. A child isolated from its own sex may be found doing things customary to the other sex, with whom it spends its play hours. Male children build houses; dig gardens; mould bulls, motor cars, trains and carts. Female children concentrate on those activities leading to the preparation of food and care of babies. 857 868

Though there is no strictly-defined list into which all these activities may be fitted, it remains for future investigators in the field of psychology to discover the degree of invention and diffusion of children's play activities. At the moment we must be content with mentioning their main features.

In every instance the activities pass from simpler to more complex forms as the mind behind them develops. Certain of these games in their more advanced forms are carried out in hidden places because the children begin to take actual things, like food, for playthings, some being taken during the mother's absence. Hence, we find that the older children are afraid of playing where they would be observed by their parents.

On being introduced to the play activities, a girl-child might begin with the grinding of the soil, which is done over a small area of cleared ground. Later, the grinding is done on a flattish stone, a leaf being placed below to receive the supposed flour. This is an imitation of the mothers or sisters when they are grinding corn,

- 857 and is an imitation taking place even among children
868 who do not see grinding stones in use. It is therefore like a vanishing feature of a culture surviving in the form of children's play activity. Leaves of plants or trees are put into a broken piece of pot (*balatago*) with a little water to represent either meat, fish or green vegetables in the process of being cooked. Small dried branches may be used to represent the fire, but actual fire is not used at this early stage. These are mainly make-believe activities in which the children persuade themselves that they are doing real things.

In the rather advanced activities the younger act as servants to the older children, who send them here and there to fetch the necessary articles and also instruct them to keep the supposed fire burning. Between the ages of six and nine, female children, as I have already mentioned, use real things in imitating the preparation of food. Thus, during the mother's absence nurses and other older children may take corn or flour, water and salt, to be made into porridge (*kuon*). They may also tear off a portion of fish or meat to be cooked in the play huts, which are generally constructed in some hidden place behind the village. Nevertheless, the vessels used are still merely broken pieces of pottery.

The play shelters themselves are small enclosures made of leafy branches. Having used the huts for several days the children abandon them or set fire to them, and there are occasions when actual houses have been set on fire during the absence of the grown-ups. If this happens, nothing is done to the children, for children are everywhere considered to be 'foolish' and capable of any mischief.

[524] Sometimes millet is boiled in old small tins or broken pots. On the whole, the method of cooking is extremely crude, nevertheless, it is significant in that it shows the

CHILDHOOD

15

independent progress of the youngsters towards the activities of adult life. At times they are so proud of their successes that they even show their prepared food to their parents; and parents are generally pleased to taste what their children have prepared, even though the articles may not be well cooked. 857● 868.

Female children may also imitate activities involving the care of babies. They make a mould of a baby and a nurse-child, using leaves and some rags for bedding and clothes. The mould-child may be given to one of the younger children, who carries it and so learns how to look after babies. Sometimes maize cobs are used instead of the moulded clay. Children may also imitate the death of a child, and all the children in the group join in the mourning. [524]

Female children are very fond of singing the songs they hear older children sing at festivals. At this age they have a greater inclination to sing than male children, and their songs sometimes help them to quiet crying babies. [533]

As a pastime the nurses engage in 'Kora', a game played with small smooth bits of stone or rounded pieces of broken pottery. This game has a series of rules which every player must observe. Younger children imitate the older ones but are not very successful because their minds and muscles are as yet immature, and they lack the steadiness and precision required for the game. It is interesting to watch, and girls as old as even twelve years take an active part in it. The stones are collected in the palm, then thrown into the air while the back of the hand is turned to receive them, the object of the game being that more than one of the stones thrown into the air must come to rest on the back of the hand. Then by a series of trials one stone is thrown into the air while another on the ground is picked up in time to receive also the stone which has been thrown up. This is 857 524

- 857 repeated until all the fallen stones have been collected,
 524 when it is considered that the game is won. The rules
 are, however, more complicated than this brief sketch
 has made them appear.

DISCIPLINE

- 857 During the period between two and six years, the
 865 children have a tendency to play with their friends until
 late in the evening. The playground may be quite re-
 moved from the house; hence parents often have to take
 strict action to keep their children within the bounds of
 their homesteads. When they are disobedient, the
 [864] normal disciplinary action is whipping. At this age
 female children are instructed to sit with their knees
 together. If one of them sits carelessly she is either warned
 or whipped. Among her duties are the fetching of fire-
 wood or dishes for food, and if she refuses to fetch fire-
 wood for anyone in the village she may be whipped.
 [868] She cannot, of course, be asked to bring fire from a
 neighbouring home, or to light it, because she lacks the
 experience necessary for this task. Crying without a
 cause is sternly repressed and if it is persisted in it earns
 the child a whipping.
- 855 *Training in decency.* Luo children from two years up-
 863 wards are greatly neglected so far as clothes, washing,
 and training in decency are concerned. Hence the
 general appearance of these children is that of dirty
 little creatures whose clothes are stained with the soil in
 which they play. Some mothers admit that they fail to
 wash their children for as long as three days. Other
 mothers do not worry at all, assuming that their children
 will go with the older children to wash themselves.
- 863 Children old enough to walk about are strictly in-
 structed not to empty their bowels inside the home but
 in front of the house beyond the enclosure. Once shown

III

THE SCHOOL AGE

FROM SIX TO ELEVEN YEARS

- 857 THE school-going age for the Luo girl is characterised
868 by its transitional nature. It is chiefly a time of useful activity, for it is this age to which society has assigned the duty of nursing, and young girls begin and end their nursing service during this period. The mother now transforms the free day of play activity into real work and mobilizes the potential abilities of the young girl for her traditional education. The benefit reaped by the family is a secondary result, because the training given at this stage is part of a long process of education for married life. So far as the girl is concerned, the interest shown in nursing is more intense in the earlier phase of this age—at about eight to nine years.

With the increasing maturity of her mental life, the young girl begins to take an interest in the household duties of older girls, and thus associates nursing with girls of a younger age. We therefore find among the older girls of the age-group a section which despises nursing. The general domestic work of the age includes collecting firewood, fetching water in small containers, and keeping the fire burning while food cooks during the absence of the mother. Firewood is collected from [313] round the village or sometimes further afield in company with older girls. In the groups the older girls may direct the younger ones where to find good firewood, but most of the collecting is done individually by the girl herself. The quantity carried increases as the child [312] grows older, and the container in which water is carried also varies similarly. When her mother is away, the

THE SCHOOL AGE

21

young girl is responsible for seeing that the food already prepared is given to the male and younger female members of the family. Males are by tradition not allowed to dip their hands in the food pot, this being exclusively a woman's duty. 857●
868
[264]
[462]

Apart from these strictly utilitarian activities, young girls slip off at intervals to play with their companions. It is during this period that male children part company with females and form their own separate play groups. Those who continue to play with girls to a later age are reproached. Although girls in the earlier phase of this age group do a considerable amount of domestic work, it is mainly of an introductory nature. Thus the mother cannot go away for a night and leave the young girl in charge. The errands given to her are simple and in accordance with her capabilities.

A later phase—ten to eleven. Again this is not an age of independence in domestic work. The young girl's duties are still limited by her inexperience. But now the mother concentrates on making the girl do more thoroughly the few duties she has learned. Two of the more important of these activities are fetching firewood and water. The mother begins to expect her daughter to make several journeys daily to the stream and at least one trip to fetch firewood without being told. If the girl forgets, she may be reproached or beaten. At this time a start is also made in the preparation of adult food. [861]

DISCIPLINE

The disciplinary training of girls of school-going age is theoretically a paternal as well as a maternal responsibility; but in practice the mother plays a much more important role than the father. It is against her mother that future blame for inefficiency in normal domestic duties will be directed. The young daughter is strictly 868
593

868 disciplined to prevent her from escaping the much
593 cherished traditional education. Discipline is weakened,
however, when the nurse is not the daughter of the
woman engaging her. In these circumstances the mis-
tress, fearing to lose the nurse's services, tolerates behav-
iour she would not countenance in her own daughter.

868 In the process of training, the young girl is expected
to be competent in household duties as early as possible.
Mothers have frequently told me that girls who begin
practising household duties later than the school-going
age, are generally very inefficient in domestic work;
thus in their early discipline mothers protect themselves
against future blame for poor training.

[594] Apart from the primary motive of training the young
girl as a prospective wife, the mother is influenced by
her desire to make her daughter of practical use to her-
self as soon as possible. The help from girls of school-
going age greatly relieves the constant pressure of a
woman's household tasks. This training also makes a
girl observe feeding manners more strictly.

861 In Luo families, a young girl is at the mercy of every-
593 one except her younger brothers and sisters. When dis-
obedient she is whipped with a stick. She thus becomes
equally tyrannical towards her juniors when they dis-
obey her. One girl told me that if her sister disobeyed
her she seized the child, knocked her down, and beat
her. This reflects the general attitude.

● 857 *Nursing.* Although some girls of this later age act as
nurses, nursing proper is more characteristic of the
earlier stage. When she nears the age of eleven, the
young girl rebels against nursing and runs back to her
home or, if nursing her own brothers and sisters, escapes
to relatives out of reach of her immediate family. This
[856] break takes place as soon as the breasts begin to develop
and is perhaps a revolutionary step caused by the grow-

THE SCHOOL AGE

23

- 857 ing interest in her body and in the opposite sex. It may
 856 be said that the loss of concern for her charge and concentration on herself is a sign announcing the emotional disturbances of adolescence. Young girls of this age now

854
 291



NURSE: AYOMA

- 857 consider nursing beneath their dignity, and their revolt
 856 is encouraged by increasing association with members of the opposite sex who would disdain talking to a child-nurse.

- 855 *Feeding.* The girls of this age group eat normal adult
 264 food, at the same time as adults, but the younger members of the group occasionally have a little food kept for them by their mothers. The consideration shown them as children depends on whether there are others younger

¹ [i.e. From six to eleven years old -
 Analyst.]

THE SCHOOL AGE

25

success given. In this atmosphere the girl slowly learns to master the art. It is not until she is thoroughly competent that she is allowed to prepare food for visitors.

Relationship with older children in the family. At first the young girl grows up in fear of and with a submissive attitude towards her older brothers and sisters, the attitude of fear decreasing towards her sisters as she begins more and more to share the same activities. Thus by the time the girls reach adolescence there is a growing feeling of companionship which brings them closer to each other in their everyday tasks, and any dominating attitude becomes consequently weaker. But among boys this attitude persists into adulthood, weakening only with the independence which adult life brings with it. Bullying is less noticeable among girls; boys of the school-going age become very tyrannical with their younger brothers and sisters, and their behaviour leads to frequent squabbles.

The attitude of a girl towards her older brothers and sisters is influenced by the treatment she receives from them. She can be sent on an errand by any older member of the family. Thus an elder child often passes orders on to her juniors since the errands in a large family are many and frequent. In this way the young girl learns to avoid and perhaps to dislike certain members of the family. As she grows older, she in turn exercises disciplinary action over those beneath her.

Parental attitude. The father plays a rather detached role, but in actual fact he retains a deep-seated interest in his growing daughter as a future promise of wealth. Though fundamentally mothers are equally interested in sons and daughters, they have at this time a more direct influence over their girls. A mother is interested in her daughter partly through her maternal responsibility and partly because of the girl's immediate value to the family, the father being more definitely concerned.

868
252
861593
255

[857]

26

THE LUO GIRL

593 with the male children. Maternal control over the
855 young girl is very great and remains about the same
when she reaches adolescence, though at this time the
father's control becomes increasingly essential in keep-
ing the growing personalities of the family in order.

• 857
312
291
482



YOUNG GIRLS GOING TO FETCH WATER

857 THE BEGINNING OF SPECIALISED ACTIVITIES

868 The school-going age marks the period when male
and female children part company. Young girls become
increasingly occupied with domestic work, such as fetch-
ing water and firewood, tending babies and watching the
fire, while male children of the same age continue to play
in groups for a much longer period. Apart from herding,
which is now less general than in the past, boys of school-

THE SCHOOL AGE

27

going age have little to do beyond playing in gangs. It is thus very common to come across gangs of male children engaged in social games. Because girls are occupied with their household duties it is much easier for boys of this age to go to school, causing less family disruption. 857 ● 868

With her time for play diminishing, the young girl struggles between work given by her mother and the powerful attraction of the play groups from which her domestic duties tend to exclude her. Therefore if she is to discharge her traditional task of education, a mother must labour to keep her daughter from associating with these groups.

The girls' early training enables them to take on family duties at which boys of the same age would fail, for in their training for responsibility the girls of this age are far in advance of their male counterpart. But the limited time in which the training must be completed has the effect of overloading a girl's school-going period. 866

The play groups. The activities carried on by girls from six to eleven years old are a continuation of those of the previous age group from two to five, but the play becomes more mature and better organized. The older girl assumes the role of organizer of the play activities of her younger sisters. Thus the activities become more complex and besides those involving the imitation of grinding corn, other articles of food appear such as meat, fish, and leaves to represent vegetables. 857

During my observations I noticed a tendency amongst young girls at play to give female names to their dolls, which probably indicates that they identify the dolls with themselves. Thus, when I suggested male names for the dolls, they were rejected. In assuming the role of the doll's mother it again seems clear that the girl identifies herself with her own mother. 524 552

Girls may also be found playing the part of a mother

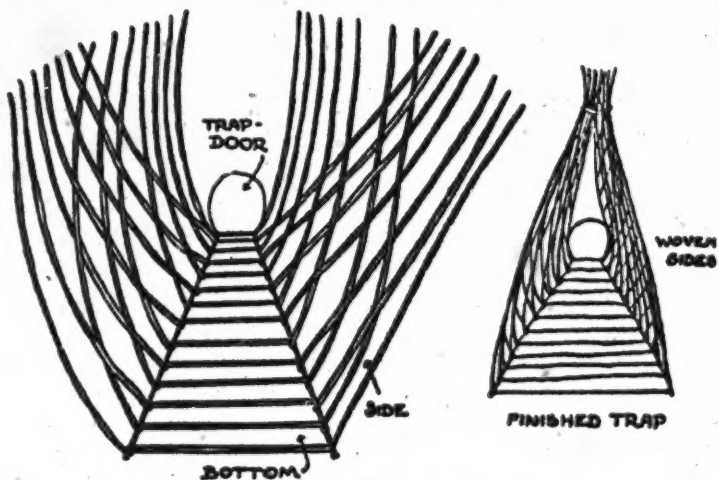
¹ *E.g. From six to eleven years old.*

ANALYST]

28

THE LUO GIRL

A SELECTION OF PATTERNS WOVEN

285
[222]

(a) A Grasshopper trap

[301]



(b) A Wrist Band



(c) Pattern for the bottom of a basket

857

both at and after birth, the younger being instructed and guided by the older ones. Boys of about five are usually found in the play groups of the school-going age, but as they grow older they are drawn away to male play groups.

The groups themselves vary in size from two members upwards, though occasionally a girl of this age may

THE SCHOOL AGE

29 000

be found playing alone. Weaving becomes more popular between these ages, and before the advent of thread this was done by means of grass stalks which were woven into several patterns. 857 285

These patterns are still woven sometimes at home and sometimes at play, but although they have not totally disappeared they are no longer much in evidence. Male children are sometimes taught to weave patterns by the girls. At present odd threads gathered from old socks or rags are used while stalks of grass serve as needles.

Age-group friendship. The age-group friendship which characterizes so much of a girl's pre-marital life first makes its appearance during the school-going age. But at this time it is friendship in the simplest sense and is more like a coming-together brought about by common interests. The main feature of the relationship is visiting, combined with moderate entertainment. After taking food the young guests join in the play activities of the friends they visit. The parents also take an interest and put up with the financial burden involved. But the friendship established is essentially external in that it is established between neighbouring girls of two lineages.* Girls visit their friends in groups, and the relationship grows weaker as the girls grow up. It appeared to me that this friendship is strongest just before the advent of their association with males on a sex basis. 857 572 [613]

As their interest in boys increases, the young girls' natural desire for friendship is fulfilled. Friendships with other girls are very much weakened by marriage and

**Lineages.* The term lineages refers to enlarged families with one common ancestor or founder. These may live side by side with the other related lineages. With the common ancestor and the branching family groups, the lineage structure appears as a 'Root System'.

As a result of fights between the various lineages in the past, some have been widely dispersed and may be found living among other groups not related to them. Frequent migrations have also tended to complicate the structure. 578 166

- 857 sometimes break up at the slightest provocation or misunderstanding. The lineal character of the friendship is facilitated by the social groupings of the people into lineages living side by side. This character is also assumed by the play groups which begin from the immediate family circle and widen to include other members of the lineage to which the children belong. Although there also exists a considerable degree of friendship among male children it does not seem to be organized as closely as that among the girls. Though I saw frequent examples of individual boyhood friendship I did not come across such a highly-developed arrangement.

THE CULTURAL PATTERN

- 857 Girls are born to a ready-made pattern of life and
858 they are forced to follow this pattern from earliest childhood. The school-age period is the one in which girls are especially trained to fit into the culture to which they have been born. A woman's life therefore tends to
[177] show great conservatism even where civilizing influences have considerably penetrated. This conservatism is maintained through all the early training of the children and domestic activities are still carried on in almost the same traditional way.

In contrast, we find that male children between these ages have a greater degree of freedom. I noticed a larger variety of playthings among boys than among girls of the same school-going age. Day after day the girls repeated imitations of the maternal activities. It was also much more difficult to discover where a group of boys had been playing than to find the favourite playgrounds of the female children. This was perhaps due to the difference in their freedom of movement. The occupations of the girls keep them largely at home while the boys range over a much greater area.

THE SCHOOL AGE

31

The sexual life of girls at school-going age. While the sexual interest shown by girls of school-going age is not as pronounced as in the succeeding age group, there is a period of transition among the older members who sometimes begin to take great interest in romantic aspirations. The older girls when talking to their men friends often tolerate the presence of younger girls, and although they are not always accompanied by them their attitude towards younger girls is not hostile as in the case of older boys and their juniors. Hence it is common to find among adolescent girls a number of the school-going age. Girls nearing adolescence usually have a great desire to see the breasts come. These are therefore constantly touched and stimulated. 864 857 ●

The horizon of sexual relationship — six to eleven. Although this age group marks the period of separation for the sexes so far as play goes, it is also a time when the older members of the groups of both sexes begin to take a specific interest in one another. The interest probably begins when the children in their imaginative play imitate the marital relationship which exists between adults. This starts with the imitation of a married couple, then proceeds to the imitation of the act of bearing a child. Both sexes take part in this.

But apart from these imitative games, a great curiosity is displayed in the examination of external reproductive organs. Among certain children we find that something approaching a crude sexual intercourse takes place when older members of the family are absent. During the period when the crops are ripening these older children, sometimes accompanied by younger ones who act as sentries, disappear into the cornfields to carry out this practice. 864

When this stage of development is made known by the younger children, who perhaps from sheer interest

THE SCHOOL AGE

33

the older girls among whom the younger girls sleep. 864
Male visitors from the homes of women in adjoining homesteads also provide an opportunity for learning the coquetry and customs of the more mature girls. Although girls of school-going age are inexperienced, they are not despised on these occasions, though the necessity of keeping order in the room forces the older girls to keep an eye on the younger girls to discourage unnecessary laughter.

The family and the school. Modern school education acts as a break in the continuity of education for domestic purposes. The school demands regular attendance, whereas the mother requires the labour of her daughter. 177
For the young girl, the school provides a relief from 871
hard and tedious work for the family, and from her 857
mother's supervision. It also provides an unrestricted field of association with other girls, whereas at home she would rarely have time to see her girl friends. Thus the school gives a very different environment. There is a general tendency to become lazy among schoolgirls passing into adolescence.

The school forces parents to sacrifice themselves; hence there is no great keenness among mothers with regard to their daughters' education. The majority of them ignore it or are actively against it. In most quarters the desired knowledge for girls is limited to reading and writing. Beyond this, women have not been able to appreciate education for girls, and they often delay their daughters' entrance into schools. Thus in the lower Primary stages most of the girls are slightly older than the boys.

Education for girls is also distrusted because at present mothers feel that after it their daughters would not fit into the pattern of life into which they were born. There is also a feeling that the traditional education at home would suffer.

IV

ADOLESCENCE

- 857 IN the interim period between childhood and adolescence there comes a time when a girl's ability to deal with domestic work is more advanced than her physical and mental development. It is during this period that the mother, still occupying a central position as adviser and supervisor of the girl's work, finds difficulty in the management of her daughter. Since the domestic work of her household is heavy, the mother uses all kinds of pressure to induce her daughter to do as much as she can.

- 593
- 856 The girl's life at this time is characterized by her increased interest in boys and desire to come into contact with them. The friendships established during childhood with other young girls are weakened by the development of a new object of friendship in the opposite sex. During this time the breasts of most girls develop noticeably. The girls show great interest in this development and employ various means to stimulate it. An instance of this interest can sometimes be seen among those who stuff clothes in their bosoms to exaggerate the size.
- [572]

On the whole, the period differs only in the fact that the girls definitely aspire to be grown-ups and are also more interested in friendship with boys.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ADOLESCENCE

- 883 This new period is the time when the mother leaves her daughter to bring her knowledge of domestic work to perfection by her own efforts. As compared with the school-going age, there is little or no interference from